

BAHRAIN MZ2

INDUSTRIES AND TRADE

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same period the figures under the three main heads averaged as follows :— 439

	IMPORTS.	EXPORTS.
Pearls	£810,000	£1,826,430
Specie	461,280	60,970
General merchandise	789,740	219,350

The principal commodities imported are rice, piece-goods, *zhi*, coffee, dates, sugar, tea, tobacco, spices, fuel, and animals for slaughter. Real exports other than pearls are of small value and importance, Bahrein being a distributing and not a producing centre; a few textiles and a little sail-cloth almost complete the tale of local manufacture. The principal share of the Bahrein trade falls to the lot of India, which is responsible for more than half of the total, though many goods arriving from that country are really of European origin, sent there for reshipment owing to the lack of direct facilities, and to the fact that Bahrein has grown accustomed to placing orders in Bombay. Next to India come Persia and Iraq, less than 10 per cent. falling to all other countries. The natural result of this preponderance is that trade is largely in the hands of Indian and Persian merchants. Besides legitimate commerce, there is a contraband traffic with the South Persian coast. In 1914 there was but a single British firm in Bahrein, Gray, Paul and Co., who are agents for the British India Steam Navigation Co.; the only other European commercial house was that of R. Wonnehaus & Co., of Hamburg, which had been established for some years. On the outbreak of war there were two resident members of the latter, the manager, who was arrested and interned at Karachi, and his assistant, who belonged to the active reserve of the German Army, and escaped to Basra. The branch was then closed. There are no banks, and transactions are largely carried out by means of Indian currency notes. [441]•

Steam communication is chiefly in British hands, the British India Steam Navigation Co. maintaining a weekly service up from Bombay and Karachi, and a fortnightly down to Karachi and Bombay. The Arab Steamers, Ltd., a line started in 1911 in opposition to the British company, call from Bombay about once every three weeks, and again on the return voyage from Basra. The boats of the Persian Gulf Steam Navigation Co. from Bombay call on the outward voyage once a month, and again on their return. Before the war, the steamers of the Hamburg-Amerika line called about once a month on the outward voyage, thus providing the only regular direct access to Bahrein from Europe. 505